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Consumer Price Index, Anchorage area – December 2020

Area prices were down 0.5 percent over the past two months, up 0.3 percent from a year ago

Prices in the Anchorage area, as measured by the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), decreased 0.5 percent for the two months ending in December 2020, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Richard Holden noted that the December decrease was influenced by lower prices for food at home and apparel. (Data in this report are not seasonally adjusted. Accordingly, bi-monthly changes may reflect seasonal influences.)

Over the last 12 months, the CPI-U advanced 0.3 percent. Food prices rose 4.5 percent. The index for all items less food and energy increased 0.4 percent over the year. Energy prices declined 8.9 percent, largely the result of a decrease in the price of gasoline. (See [table 1.](#))

Food

Food prices declined 1.3 percent for the two months ending in December. (See [table 1.](#)) Prices for food at home declined 2.6 percent, influenced by lower prices for the categories of other food at home, and fruits and vegetables. Prices for food away from home advanced 0.9 percent for the same period.

Over the year, food prices rose 4.5 percent. Prices for food at home rose 6.1 percent since a year ago, influenced by higher prices for meats, poultry, fish, and eggs. Prices for food away from home rose 2.1 percent.

Energy

The energy index crept up 0.2 percent for the two months ending in December. The increase was mainly due to higher prices for gasoline (0.2 percent). Prices for both electricity and prices for natural gas service were unchanged for the same period.

Energy prices declined 8.9 percent over the year, largely due to lower prices for gasoline (-17.6 percent). Prices for natural gas service decreased 1.7 percent, and prices paid for electricity inched down 0.2 percent during the past year.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy decreased 0.4 percent in the latest two-month period. Lower prices for apparel (-7.0 percent), new vehicles (-3.4 percent), and household furnishings and operations (-1.8 percent) were partially offset by higher prices for recreation (2.5 percent) and other goods and services (0.8 percent).

Over the year, the index for all items less food and energy increased 0.4 percent. Components contributing to the increase included used cars and trucks (11.1 percent), medical care (4.7 percent), and household furnishings and operations (2.8 percent). Partly offsetting the increases were price decreases in apparel (-9.9 percent), recreation (-0.5 percent), and shelter (-0.2 percent).

The February 2021 Consumer Price Index for the Anchorage area is scheduled to be released on March 10, 2021.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic Impact on December 2020 Consumer Price Index Data

Data collection by personal visit for the Consumer Price Index (CPI) program has been suspended since March 16, 2020. When possible, data normally collected by personal visit were collected either online or by phone. Additionally, data collection in December was affected by the temporary closing or limited operations of certain types of establishments. These factors resulted in an increase in the number of prices considered temporarily unavailable and imputed.

While the CPI program attempted to collect as much data as possible, many indexes are based on smaller amounts of collected prices than usual, and a small number of indexes that are normally published were not published this month. Additional information is available at <https://www.bls.gov/covid19/effects-of-covid-19-pandemic-on-consumer-price-index.htm>.

Technical Note

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the average change in prices over time in a fixed market basket of goods and services. The Bureau of Labor Statistics publishes CPIs for two population groups: (1) a CPI for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) which covers approximately 93 percent of the total U.S. population and (2) a CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) which covers approximately 29 percent of the total U.S. population. The CPI-U includes, in addition to wage earners and clerical workers, groups such as professional, managerial, and technical workers, the self-employed, short-term workers, the unemployed, and retirees and others not in the labor force.

The CPI is based on prices of food, clothing, shelter, and fuels, transportation fares, charges for doctors' and dentists' services, drugs, and the other goods and services that people buy for day-to-day living. Each month, prices are collected in 75 urban areas across the country from about 6,000 housing units and approximately 22,000 retail establishments—department stores, supermarkets, hospitals, filling stations, and other types of stores and service establishments. All taxes directly associated with the purchase and use of items are included in the index.

The index measures price changes from a designated reference date; for most of the CPI-U the reference base is 1982-84 equals 100. An increase of 7 percent from the reference base, for example, is shown as 107.000. Alternatively, that relationship can also be expressed as the price of a base period market basket of goods and services rising from \$100 to \$107. For further details see the CPI home page on the internet at www.bls.gov/cpi and the CPI section of the BLS Handbook of Methods available on the internet at www.bls.gov/opub/hom/cpi/.

In calculating the index, price changes for the various items in each location are averaged together with weights that represent their importance in the spending of the appropriate population group. Local data are then combined to obtain a U.S. city average. Because the sample size of a local area is smaller, the local area index is subject to substantially more sampling and other measurement error than the national index. In addition, local indexes are not adjusted for seasonal influences. As a result, local area indexes show greater volatility than the national index, although their long-term trends are quite similar. **NOTE: Area indexes do not measure differences in the level of prices between cities; they only measure the average change in prices for each area since the base period.**

The Urban Alaska area covered in this release consists of Anchorage and Matanuska-Susitna Borough in the State of Alaska.

Information in this release will be made available to individuals with sensory impairments upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; Federal Relay Service: (800) 877-8339.

Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods Urban Alaska (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from-		
	Oct. 2020	Nov. 2020	Dec. 2020	Dec. 2019	Oct. 2020	Nov. 2020
Expenditure category						
All items	228.343	-	227.259	0.3	-0.5	-
All items (1967=100)	609.478	-	606.586	-	-	-
Food and beverages	227.611	-	224.780	3.9	-1.2	-
Food	235.252	-	232.307	4.5	-1.3	-
Food at home	233.482	233.612	227.517	6.1	-2.6	-2.6
Cereals and bakery products	242.020	-	235.506	3.4	-2.7	-
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	226.894	-	228.291	14.3	0.6	-
Dairy and related products	225.591	-	218.691	6.2	-3.1	-
Fruits and vegetables	362.039	-	349.765	3.9	-3.4	-
Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials(1)	146.520	-	147.753	0.2	0.8	-
Other food at home	195.565	-	184.603	5.2	-5.6	-
Food away from home	235.106	-	237.192	2.1	0.9	-
Alcoholic beverages	154.538	-	152.761	-3.4	-1.1	-
Housing	206.385	-	206.121	0.0	-0.1	-
Shelter	203.548	203.169	203.660	-0.2	0.1	0.2
Rent of primary residence(2)	200.833	200.071	200.274	0.9	-0.3	0.1
Owners' equiv. rent of residences(2)	205.368	204.771	205.045	-0.4	-0.2	0.1
Owners' equiv. rent of primary residence(2)	205.368	204.771	205.045	-0.4	-0.2	0.1
Fuels and utilities	359.786	-	359.896	-0.2	0.0	-
Household energy	375.871	375.955	376.025	-0.9	0.0	0.0
Energy services	419.074	419.074	419.074	-0.9	0.0	0.0
Electricity	372.819	372.819	372.819	-0.2	0.0	0.0
Utility (piped) gas service	474.924	474.924	474.924	-1.7	0.0	0.0
Household furnishings and operations	137.416	-	134.980	2.8	-1.8	-
Apparel	145.995	-	135.709	-9.9	-7.0	-
Transportation	216.914	-	214.195	-3.3	-1.3	-
Private transportation	226.202	-	223.738	-3.2	-1.1	-
New and used motor vehicles(3)	113.833	-	111.627	2.1	-1.9	-
New vehicles(1)	259.400	-	250.470	1.7	-3.4	-
Used cars and trucks(1)	288.199	-	283.894	11.1	-1.5	-
Motor fuel	198.875	198.992	199.747	-17.8	0.4	0.4
Gasoline (all types)	200.372	200.108	200.794	-17.6	0.2	0.3
Gasoline, unleaded regular(4)	192.051	191.796	192.497	-17.9	0.2	0.4
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(4)(5)	195.275	195.020	194.730	-17.6	-0.3	-0.1
Gasoline, unleaded premium(4)	210.248	209.980	210.635	-16.1	0.2	0.3
Motor vehicle insurance(1)	-	-	874.057	-2.4	-	-
Medical care	662.905	-	660.426	4.7	-0.4	-
Recreation(3)	125.184	-	128.294	-0.5	2.5	-
Education and communication(3)	115.179	-	115.108	1.1	-0.1	-
Tuition, other school fees, and child care(1) ..	761.218	-	761.218	-	0.0	-
Other goods and services	372.133	-	375.054	2.7	0.8	-
Commodity and service group						
All items	228.343	-	227.259	0.3	-0.5	-
Commodities	185.793	-	184.101	0.7	-0.9	-
Commodities less food & beverages	164.411	-	163.282	-1.3	-0.7	-
Nondurables less food & beverages	200.954	-	197.998	-6.6	-1.5	-
Durables	131.503	-	131.630	4.5	0.1	-
Services	264.865	-	264.370	0.1	-0.2	-

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods Urban Alaska (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) - Continued

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from-		
	Oct. 2020	Nov. 2020	Dec. 2020	Dec. 2019	Oct. 2020	Nov. 2020
Special aggregate indexes						
All items less medical care	213.409	-	212.376	-0.1	-0.5	-
All items less shelter.....	238.907	-	237.188	0.6	-0.7	-
Commodities less food	164.334	-	163.168	-1.4	-0.7	-
Nondurables	215.835	-	212.942	-0.9	-1.3	-
Nondurables less food.....	198.016	-	195.164	-6.3	-1.4	-
Services less rent of shelter(2).....	366.375	-	364.733	0.4	-0.4	-
Services less medical care services.....	241.546	-	241.135	-0.8	-0.2	-
Energy	273.129	273.233	273.707	-8.9	0.2	0.2
All items less energy	226.083	-	224.899	1.1	-0.5	-
All items less food and energy	224.835	-	223.965	0.4	-0.4	-

Footnotes

(1) Indexes on a December 1978=100 base.

(2) Indexes on a December 1982=100 base.

(3) Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.

(4) Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

(5) Indexes on a December 1993=100 base.

- Data not available

NOTE: Index applies to a month as a whole, not to any specific date.